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of Virginia, which at that time and afterward held the same sort of pivotal place in a Presidential contest as Indiana has held in later days.

A second instance of Presidential meanness, which may claim a place in Mr. Rogers' list, recalls another U. S. Senator from New York—Hon. Daniel S. Dickinson. It also recalls the old importance of Virginia in Presidential elections. Mr. Dickinson, it has always been said, could have had the nomination for President at Baltimore in 1852 if he had accepted the proffer of Virginia's delegates to support him for the place which went almost by accident to Franklin Pierce. Being committed to the interests of Lewis Cass, he would not surrender them. If he had done this thing, analogous examples of which later history can furnish, he, and not Mr. Pierce, would have won the election over General Scott, who only carried four States.

But Mr. Dickinson preferred loyalty to his trust, and the steadiness of his adhesion to it was all the more notable since he felt at the time that he was throwing away the Presidency to serve a friend; and, for no other purpose, at the end, than to be unimpeachably faithful to him.

JOEL BENTON.

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#### THE TRUTH ABOUT THE "OPIUM WAR"

A VERY common feature of any discussion in the United States of the trade or commercial policy of England in respect to other nations, is the preference of a charge against her, of having, more than a half a century ago, instituted a war "in order to force poor China to take the opium that England was trying to compel her to import, no matter what the great evils resulting." For this charge, which has been popularly regarded as irrefutable, there is no good or sufficient warrant, further than that complete evidence to the contrary has only within a recent period become popularly accessible through the publication of English state papers; although the would-be American authorities on this subject might, in at least a degree, have become cognizant of the exact truth (as will be presently shown), had they taken the trouble to acquaint themselves with the published results of an investigation of this subject by one of their own and greatest statesmen. A summary of the indisputable facts in the case are as follows:

Previous to the inception of the so-called "opium war" between England and China (*i.e.*, in 1840), opium was cultivated in no less than ten of the provinces of China, and its importation was permitted and regularly taxed, the same as any other imports. Opium, the product of India, was imported into China by the East India Company under such circumstances, and without inhibition; but to an estimated extent of more than two per cent. of what would be necessary to meet the demand of the whole Chinese population. The charge that England first introduced opium into China has, therefore, not the slightest foundation in facts.

Some time previous to 1840 the Chinese government prohibited not merely its importation but its use for any purpose, and any violation of these enactments was made a capital offence. As the appetite for opium on the part of the Chinese was not thereby extinguished, the business of smuggling and illicit dealing became very great, and is now known to have been largely participated in by the very Chinese officials whose business it was to enforce the law. The Chinese government, furthermore, was not successful in enforcing their law against opium. What was then also the policy of the British government towards China is demonstrated by the

fact that Lord Palmerston, then premier, sent a despatch to one British resident agent in China, to the effect that, if any British subject chose to contravene the laws of China in respect to trade in opium, "he must do it at his own risk." On the other hand, the Chinese Government, from the very outset of the opium trouble, refused to enter into any negotiations with the representatives of the British Government, not in the interests of the opium trade, not in the interest of trade at all, but in order to put the relations of the two governments on a footing that would be tolerable and induce the Chinese to no longer assume that all foreigners were barbarians, and that barbarians must be kept under control. When Lord Napier was sent as Minister to China in 1834, its government declined to have anything to do with him, and went out of its way to belittle him by using offensive characters for his name, and in other ways insult him. When Lord Napier, fairly driven out of China, was replaced by Sir Charles Elliot, the Chinese authorities at Canton, for the purpose of deliberate insult to foreigners in general, proposed to make the area in front of the so-called "factories," where British merchants and the citizens of other countries were virtually compelled to reside, a place for the public execution of criminals.

As might have been expected, war followed such a condition of things. It was virtually commenced by the Chinese, who sent a fleet of fire-ships to burn the English shipping in the harbor of Canton. It resulted in obtaining from the Chinese government a promise, that was not, however, kept, that the persons and property of the merchants of all nations trading with China should be protected in the future from insult and injury, and that their trade and commerce should be maintained upon a footing common to all foreign civilized countries. And if England had not undertaken the task of teaching the Chinese this initiatory lesson, the government of the United States would sooner or later have had to have done it, if they were to maintain peaceful commercial relations and trade with China.

The so-called "opium war" of 1840, thus brought about, attracted much attention in the United States, as the interests of its merchants prospectively involved was at that time very considerable, and among those of its citizens who especially considered the subject was ex-President John Quincy Adams, who gave to the American public, in December, 1841, the results of his investigations and study, in the form of a lecture before the Massachusetts Historical Society, which was subsequently reprinted in the *Chinese Repository*, an American missionary paper published in Canton. After tracing historically what had occurred up to the year 1841, Mr. Adams said: "Do I hear you inquire what is all this to the opium question or the taking of Canton? These, I answer, are but the movement of mind on this globe of earth, of which the war between Great Britain and China is now the leading star. The justice of the cause between the two parties—which has the righteous cause? I answer, Britain has the righteous cause. The opium question is not the cause of the war, but the arrogant and insupportable pretensions of China that she will hold commercial intercourse with the rest of mankind, not upon terms of equal reciprocity, but upon the insulting and degrading forms of the relation between lord and vassal."

DAVID A. WELLS.